

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 2157

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: CI, PINT, PINS

SUBJECT: GENERAL LEIGH BLASTS POLITICIANS, CALLS FOR UNITY

REF: SANTIAGO 2133

1. IN SPEECH AT UNION CLUB APRIL 8, AIR FORCE COMMANDER AND JUNTA MEMBER GENERAL GUSTAVO LEIGH URGED THAT PRESENT "MONOLITHIC UNITY" OF ARMED FORCES BE EXTENDED TO REST OF COUNTRY "SO THAT ALL CHILEANS CAN UNDERSTAND IT AND PRACTICE IT."

2. IN SLAP AT POLITICIANS, LEIGH SAID THAT, EVEN AS CHILE IS FACED WITH "GIGANTIC INTERNATIONAL" CAMPAIGN AGAINST IT, "SO MUST WE ALSO WORRY ABOUT CERTAIN DOMESTIC POLITICAL SECTORS WHO WANT AT ALL COSTS TO RECOVER POWER. THEY SAY: 'ARMED OPPOSITION IS OVER; EXTREMISM IN CHILE HAS ENDED; THEREFORE THE MILITARY SHOULD GO HOME'...THAT'S THEIR OPINION, (THEREBY) SHOWING AN INNOCENCE AND LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF THE SITUATION IN CHILE WHICH IS FRUSTRATING. (BUT WE IN THE MILITARY KNOW) THAT THIS IS NOT THE CASE, AND THAT THE COUNTRY WILL PLAY ITS ROLE FREELY AND DEMOCRATICALLY (ONLY) WHEN THE INSTITUTIONS OF DEFENSE HAVE CONSOLIDATED A STRONG COUNTRY AND A HEALTHY ECONOMY, LEAVING BEHIND A CONSTITUTION WHICH WILL GUARANTEE THAT NEVER AGAIN WILL WE FALL INTO THE DARKNESS IN WHICH WE

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LIVED DURING THOSE THREE DAMNABLE YEARS."

3. COMMENT: WE NOTE THAT THIS IS LIEGH'S THIRD MAJOR PUBLIC SPEECH IN TWO WEEKS. HIS SUDDEN REEMERGENCE IN THE PUBLIC SPOTLIGHT AND THE NOTABLY HARD ANTI-CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC LINE OF HIS STATEMENTS HAVE RAISED SOME EYEBROWS AROUND TOWN, PARTICULARLY IN CONTEXT OF KNOWN EFFORTS FROM SOME QUARTERS TO INDUCE GOC TO MODERATE ITS SECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES (REFTEL). IN HIS PUBLIC APPEARANCES, LEIGH IS TO SOME DEGREE URGING AGAINST SUCH RELAXATION AND CLEARLY INDICATING ANY RELAXATION WHICH MAY OCCUR IN HUMAN RIGHTS AREA WILL NOT APPLY TO POLITICAL RIGHTS. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NO HARD EVIDENCE, IT IS ALSO CONCEIVABLE THAT LEIGH'S NEW PROMINENCE MAY BE IN PART RESPONSIVE TO SOME INTERNAL AIR FORCE FEELING THAT PINOCHET AND THE ARMY ARE GETTING TOO FAR OUT AHEAD OF THEIR OTHER MILITARY COLLEAGUES.

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NNN

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